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(54) Title: IMPLANTABLE SENSOR WITH WIRELESS COMMUNICATION
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(57) Abstract

An implantable sensor device, such as a pressure monitor, is implanted in the left ventricle (LV), in other heart chambers, or elsewhere, from which it wirelessly communicates pressure information to a remote communication device. The sensor device can be implanted using a placement catheter, an endoscope, or a laparoscope. The device can be secured entirely within the LV or heart wall, such as by using a corkscrew, a helical anchor, a harpoon, a threaded member, a hook, a barb, a fastener, a suture, or a mesh or coating for receiving fibrous tissue growth. The implantable sensor device provides less invasive chronic measurements of left ventricular blood pressure or other physical parameters. The wireless communication techniques include radio-telemetry, inductive coupling, passive transponders, and using the body as a conductor (referred to as "intracorporeal conductive communication" or "personal area network"). Data from the receiver is downloadable into a computer for analysis or display.

(57) Abrégé

L'invention concerne un capteur implantable, tel qu'un dispositif de surveillance de la pression artérielle, qui est implanté dans le ventricule gauche, dans une autre cavité cardiaque ou ailleurs, et qui envoie par communication sans fil des informations relatives à la pression artérielle à un dispositif de transmission distant. Le capteur peut être implanté au moyen d'un cathéter de mise en place, d'un endoscope ou d'un laparoscope. Le dispositif peut être fixé tout entier à l'intérieur du ventricule gauche ou de la paroi du coeur par la mise en place d'un élément en tire-bouchon, un dispositif d'ancrage hélicoïdal, un harpon, un élément fileté, un crochet, une barbe, un dispositif d'assemblage, un fil de suture, une maille ou un revêtement permettant la croissance du tissu fibreux. Le capteur implantable permet d'effectuer des mesures chroniques faiblement invasives de la pression artérielle du ventricule gauche ou d'autres paramètres physiques. L'équipement de transmission sans fil employé comprend un appareil de télémessure, un couplage par induction et des transpondeurs passifs, le corps étant utilisé comme un conducteur (_ système de transmission intracorporel de conduction ou _ réseau humain _). Les données reçues du capteur peuvent être téléchargées sur un ordinateur afin qu'elles soient analysées ou affichées.

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(54) Title: IMPLANTABLE SENSOR WITH WIRELESS COMMUNICATION			
(57) Abstract			
<p>An implantable sensor device, such as a pressure monitor, is implanted in the left ventricle (LV), in other heart chambers, or elsewhere, from which it wirelessly communicates pressure information to a remote communication device. The sensor device can be implanted using a placement catheter, an endoscope, or a laparoscope. The device can be secured entirely within the LV or heart wall, such as by using a corkscrew, a helical anchor, a harpoon, a threaded member, a hook, a barb, a fastener, a suture, or a mesh or coating for receiving fibrous tissue growth. The implantable sensor device provides less invasive chronic measurements of left ventricular blood pressure or other physical parameters. The wireless communication techniques include radio-telemetry, inductive coupling, passive transponders, and using the body as a conductor (referred to as "intracorporeal conductive communication" or "personal area network"). Data from the receiver is downloadable into a computer for analysis or display.</p>			

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Description

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IMPLANTABLE SENSOR WITH WIRELESS COMMUNICATION

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Field of the Invention

This invention relates generally to an implantable sensor with wireless communication, and particularly, but not by way of limitation, to physiological monitoring of pressure or other parameters in humans and animals using a monitor that is implantable within a heart chamber or elsewhere and is capable of wireless communication of sensor information therefrom.

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Background

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The monitoring of fluid pressure within a body organ provides an important tool for medical research and clinical diagnosis. For example, hydrocephalus and head injuries can cause body fluids to build up within the brain. The resulting fluid pressure buildup can result in death or serious brain damage. In another example, urinary dysfunction can cause fluid pressure to build up in the bladder. In a further example, intrapleural pressure measurements can be used to monitor the respiration of infants who have been identified as being at risk for sudden infant death syndrome.

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Blood pressure measurements are particularly important for medical research and diagnosis for a variety of reasons. Such measurements provide researchers with insight into the physiology and functioning of the heart. Blood pressure measurements also provide researchers with useful information regarding the safety and efficacy of pharmaceuticals and the toxicity of chemicals. By transducing blood pressure into a signal waveform, a variety of useful parameters can be extracted. These parameters provide valuable information for the diagnosis of heart disease. Left ventricular (LV) blood pressures measurements are particularly important because the left ventricle chamber of the heart pumps blood to the systemic circulatory system, that is, throughout the rest of the body.

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Common parameters extracted from left ventricular blood pressure waveforms include peak systolic pressure (the high pressure peak resulting from a contraction of the left ventricle chamber of the heart), and diastolic pressure (the low pressure valley resulting from expansion of the left ventricle), and

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5 maximum dP/dt (a peak value of how fast the pressure (P) changes with time (t) during a contraction of the left ventricle). These blood pressure measurements provide helpful diagnostic information to the physician.

10 For example, maximum dP/dt provides a measure of the work that is being done by the heart. For certain conditions, such as congestive heart failure (CHF), it is desired to reduce the work load on the heart. The treating physician can determine how effective a therapy is by determining if the treatment regimen has indeed reduced the work load on the heart, as indicated by the maximum dP/dt signal extracted from the left ventricular blood pressure waveform.

15 Measurement of left ventricular blood pressure is also useful for titrating new drugs for treating heart disease, that is, determining the desired dosage or concentration of a new drug. Titrating new drugs requires information on how these drugs are affecting the heart.

20 For example, beta adrenergic blocking drugs are often effective at treating arrhythmias and improving patient hemodynamics. However, such drugs are difficult to titrate. Because left ventricular blood pressure parameters, such as maximum dP/dt , provide information on how the heart is functioning, monitoring these parameters allows a physician to more easily determine the most appropriate dose of the drug for treating the patient. The maximum dP/dt signal, if available, could also be used as a feedback mechanism in a system that automatically delivers therapy to adjust the work load of the heart. The delivery of therapy is automatically adjusted based on the work load of the heart, as indicated by the maximum dP/dt signal.

25 In another example, left ventricular blood pressure provides useful information for controlling a cardiac rhythm management system. Cardiac rhythm management systems include, among other things, pacemakers, or pacers. Pacers deliver timed sequences of low energy electrical stimuli, called pace pulses, to the heart. Heart contractions are initiated in response to such pace pulses. By properly timing the delivery of pace pulses, the heart can be induced to contract in proper rhythm, greatly improving its efficiency as a pump. Pacers are often used to treat patients with bradyarrhythmias, that is, hearts that beat too slowly, or irregularly. Cardiac rhythm management systems also include cardioverters or defibrillators that are capable of delivering higher energy

5 electrical stimuli to the heart. Defibrillators are often used to treat patients with
tachyarrhythmias, that is, hearts that beat too quickly. Such too-fast heart
rhythms also cause diminished blood circulation because the heart isn't allowed
10 sufficient time to fill with blood before contracting to expel the blood. Such
5 pumping by the heart is inefficient. A defibrillator is capable of delivering an
high energy electrical stimulus that is sometimes referred to as a countershock.
15 The countershock interrupts the tachyarrhythmia, allowing the heart to
reestablish a normal rhythm for the efficient pumping of blood. In addition to
pacers, cardiac rhythm management systems also include, among other things,
10 pacer/defibrillators that combine the functions of pacers and defibrillators, drug
20 delivery devices, and any other systems or devices for diagnosing or treating
cardiac arrhythmias.

One example of using a cardiac rhythm management device to control
heart rate in proportion to left ventricular blood pressure is described in Mehra
25 U.S. Patent No. 5,129,394. The '394 patent, however, does not disclose sensing
15 actual left ventricular blood pressure. Instead, it discloses a pressure sensor
located in the coronary vein. The coronary vein extends from the right atrium
30 through the heart tissue near the left ventricle. Because of its small size, the
coronary vein is difficult to access for inserting a pressure sensor. Moreover,
20 blood pressure sensing in the coronary vein provides only an indirect
approximation of the actual left ventricular blood pressure.

35 Other existing techniques for monitoring left ventricular blood pressure
also have drawbacks. One technique of measuring left ventricular blood
pressure is described in Brockway et al. U.S. Patent No. 4,846,191, which is
40 25 assigned to the assignee of the present application. The '191 patent describes a
pressure sensor that is implanted in the abdomen of a laboratory animal. The
pressure sensor is connected to an organ, such as the heart or the brain, via a
fluid-filled pressure transmitting catheter (PTC). One limitation of this device is
45 that it requires invasive access to the organ in which fluid pressure is to be
30 monitored.

For example, in monitoring left ventricular pressure, one surgical
50 technique for using the device described in the '191 patent involves performing a
highly invasive laparotomy procedure. In this procedure, the pressure

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transmitting catheter is passed through an incision in the diaphragm and an incision into the apex (bottom tip) of the heart. The high blood pressure in the left ventricle further increases the risk of making such incisions directly into the left ventricle. This procedure typically requires a two week recovery period for the laboratory animal. Moreover, because catheterization of the apex involves significant risks, this technique would likely be considered too invasive for human use.

Alternatively, an incision may be made into the aorta, which is the primary artery carrying blood from the left ventricle to the rest of the body. The pressure transmitting catheter is then passed into the aortic incision for measuring blood pressure in the aorta. Aortic incisions are also problematic because of the high blood pressure in the arterial circulatory system. Moreover, measuring blood pressure in the aorta does not provide a direct measurement of blood pressure in the left ventricle; such information is unavailable, for example, when the aortic valve is closed. Alternatively, the pressure transmitting catheter could be passed through the aortic valve into the left ventricle. However, leaving the pressure transmitting catheter extending through the aortic valve for a long period of time risks damage to the aortic valve as a result of the high blood pressure in the left ventricle. Thus, this procedure is also likely unsuitable for human use, particularly for chronic left ventricular blood pressure monitoring, i.e., monitoring over an extended period of time.

Another technique for measuring left ventricular blood pressure is described in Pohndorf et al. U.S. Patent No. 5,353,800. A distal end of a pressure sensing lead is transvenously introduced into the right ventricle of the patient's heart. A hollow needle at the distal end of the lead is punched through the ventricular septum, that is, through the wall separating the right and left ventricles. This provides access to the left ventricle for sensing pressure gradients that are communicated through the hollow needle to a pressure sensor that is outside of the left ventricle. Because this procedure involves invasively forming an opening in the septum, it creates significant risks for human cardiac patients who are likely already very sick and vulnerable to such risks.

A further technique for measuring left ventricular blood pressure uses a pressure sensing catheter, such as a "Millar catheter," available from Millar

5 Instruments, Inc., of Houston, TX. The pressure sensing catheter is passed
through the left atrium and through the mitral valve (which separates the left
atrium and left ventricle) into the left ventricle. As discussed above, however,
10 high blood pressures exist in the left ventricle, which would likely result in
5 damage to the mitral valve if the catheter were left interposed in the mitral valve
for a long period of time. As a result, if a sequence of successive measurements
is to be obtained over a long period of time, the patient must undergo
15 recatheterization for each measurement. However, catheterization itself involves
risk, discomfort, and expense, making multiple catheterizations of the patient
10 very undesirable.

20 In summary, present techniques for measuring left ventricular pressure
are too invasive for human use and unsuitable for use over an extended period of
time. Physicians and researchers need less invasive techniques for chronic
measurement of left ventricular blood pressure, both for diagnosing heart
25 conditions and for determining whether therapy delivered to the heart is adequate
15 for effectively treating the patient's symptoms.

Summary

30 The present system provides, among other things, a less invasive
implantable sensor device capable of wirelessly communicating sensor
20 information. The sensor is implantable in a heart chamber, in other body organs
and body cavities, and elsewhere within a living organism. One example
35 includes a blood pressure monitoring device that is suitable for use over an
extended period of time in the left ventricle for wirelessly communicating blood
pressure information therefrom. This provides less invasive chronic pressure
25 measurements in the left ventricle. As a result, the risk of obtaining such
40 important measurements is reduced. This enables a physician to more accurately
diagnose and treat serious heart conditions. It also enables a biomedical
researcher to monitor sensor signals in animal research studies.

45 In one example, the wirelessly communicated left ventricular blood
30 pressure information is used to control the delivery of therapy by a cardiac
rhythm management device. In another example, the present system
advantageously allows a physician to obtain a sequence of left ventricular blood
50 pressure measurements over a long period of time. By contrast, using a pressure

5 sensing catheter for obtaining such measurements over a long period of time
risks damaging heart valves because of the high blood pressures that exist in the
left ventricle. Because the present system allows long term monitoring, it can be
10 used, for example, in assessing circadian variations in physiological data over a
5 period of time. Such information is potentially valuable in diagnosing and
treating patients. *See, e.g.,* Brian P. Brockway, Perry A. Mills, and Sylvia H.
15 Azar, "A New Method For Continuous Chronic Measurement and Recording of
Blood Pressure, Heart Rate, and Activity in the Rat via Radio-Telemetry,"
Clinical and Experimental Hypertension - Theory and Practice, A13(5), pp. 885-
10 895 (1991), which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

20 Certain particular embodiments of the invention are summarized below,
by way of illustrative example, but not by way of limitation. The scope of the
invention should, therefore, be determined with reference to the appended
25 claims, along with the full scope of equivalents to which such claims are entitled.

15 One aspect of the invention provides an apparatus for sensing a parameter
in a heart chamber in a heart in a living organism. The apparatus includes a
sensor and a wireless communication circuit. The sensor is adapted for being
30 disposed in the heart chamber. The sensor provides a sensor signal based on the
parameter sensed in the heart chamber. The wireless communication circuit is
20 adapted for being disposed in the heart chamber. The communication circuit is
coupled to the sensor and transmits information out of the heart chamber based
35 on the sensor signal. The wireless communication techniques include radio-
telemetry, reactive coupling, passive transponders, and intracorporeal conductive
communication.

40 In one embodiment, the sensing apparatus includes a housing carrying
the sensor and the communication circuit and at least one stabilizer that is
coupled to the housing. Also included in the housing is a battery which, in one
embodiment, is recharged by energy received from outside the heart chamber. A
45 receiver, external to the heart chamber, is communicatively coupled to the
30 communication circuit for receiving the information based on the sensor signal.
In one embodiment, the receiver is carried by a cardiac rhythm management
system, and therapy delivered by the cardiac rhythm management system is
50 adjusted according to information wirelessly received from the sensor device

5 implanted in the heart chamber. In another embodiment, the receiver is coupled
to a computer that analyzes or displays the information from the sensor. In one
10 embodiment, the sensor is a pressure transducer, however, other sensors may
also be used.

5 Another aspect of the invention includes a method of sensing a parameter
(e.g., blood pressure) in a heart chamber in a heart in a living organism. A
15 physical manifestation of the parameter in the heart chamber is received at a
sensor disposed within the heart chamber, where it is transduced into a sensor
signal. Information based on the sensor signal is wirelessly communicated from
10 the heart chamber. A further embodiment includes translumenally disposing the
20 sensor in the heart chamber.

One embodiment of communicating the information includes using a
passive transponder. In this technique, energy is received from outside the heart
25 at a passive transponder that is in the heart. The passive transponder is powered
15 from the energy received from outside the heart chamber. Information is
transmitted from the heart chamber using the powered passive transponder. In
another embodiment, energy received from outside the heart chamber is used to
30 recharge a battery that is located in the heart chamber.

Another embodiment of communicating information includes using
20 intracorporeal conductive communication, which uses the living organism as the
conductor. In this technique, a current is conducted through at least a portion of
35 the living organism. A signal that is based on this current is received at a
receiver that is outside the heart chamber. In one embodiment, the receiver is
carried by an implantable medical device located within the living organism such
40 25 as, for example, a cardiac rhythm management device. Therapy delivered by the
cardiac rhythm management device is adjusted based on the signal received by
intracorporeal conductive communication or other wireless communication
technique. In another embodiment, the receiver is external to the living
45 organism, and information is stored in a memory in the receiver.

30 Another aspect of the invention provides a method. The method includes
inducing a current between first electrodes implanted in a living organism. The
50 current at the first electrodes is modulated with a data signal. A signal based on

5 the current is demodulated at second electrodes. In one embodiment, the second electrodes are also implanted in the living organism.

10 Another aspect of the invention provides a catheter. The catheter includes an elongate member having first and second ends. The first end of the
5 elongate member includes a cavity adapted for carrying an implantable measurement device that includes a wireless communication circuit. The elongate member also includes a lumen extending substantially between the
15 cavity and the second end of the elongate member. An engaging member is carried by the cavity. The engaging member is extendable outwardly from the cavity at the first end of the elongate member. The engaging member is
10 operatively coupled to a manipulator at the second end of the elongate member. The engaging member is adapted for engaging the implantable measurement device. In one embodiment, portions of the elongate member are flexible such
20 that the catheter is adapted for transluminal access to a heart chamber. Other aspects of the invention will be apparent on reading the following detailed description of the invention and viewing the drawings that form a part thereof.

Brief Description of the Drawings

30 In the drawings, like numerals describe substantially similar components throughout the several views.

20 Figure 1 is a schematic diagram illustrating generally one embodiment of portions of a sensor system, such as a pressure monitor system, and an environment in which it is used.

35 Figure 2 is a schematic diagram illustrating generally an embodiment of certain external portions of the system.

40 25 Figure 3A is a schematic/block diagram illustrating generally one embodiment of a portion of an implantable sensor device, such as an implantable pressure monitor device including a corkscrew stabilizer.

45 30 Figure 3B is a schematic/block diagram illustrating generally one embodiment of an implantable sensor device, such as an implantable pressure monitor device including a harpoon or barbed stabilizer.

50 Figure 3C is a schematic/block diagram illustrating generally one embodiment of an implantable sensor device, such as an implantable pressure monitor device including a mesh stabilizer and a corkscrew stabilizer.

Figure 3D is a schematic/block diagram illustrating generally one embodiment of an implantable sensor device, such as an implantable pressure monitor device including a deformable stabilizer.

Figure 4 is a schematic diagram illustrating generally one embodiment of the present system using wireless communication, such as intracorporeal conductive communication, between an implanted medical device, such as cardiac rhythm management system, and an external remote receiver.

Figure 5 is a schematic diagram illustrating generally one embodiment of the present system using wireless communication, such as intracorporeal conductive communication, between an implanted sensor device and an implanted remote receiver that is carried by an implanted medical device such as by cardiac rhythm management system

Figure 6 is a cross-sectional schematic diagram illustrating generally one embodiment of a placement catheter for implanting a sensor device, such as an implantable pressure monitor device.

Figure 7 is a schematic diagram illustrating another embodiment of an implantable sensor device, such as a pressure monitor, having a housing that is substantially implanted within tissue, such as the interior wall of a heart chamber.

Figure 8 is a schematic diagram illustrating generally another embodiment of a sensor device for implantation substantially within tissue and having a substantially flexible anchor.

Figure 9 is a schematic diagram illustrating generally another embodiment of a sensor device for implantation substantially within tissue and having a substantially rigid anchor.

Detailed Description

In the following detailed description, reference is made to the accompanying drawings which form a part hereof, and in which is shown by way of illustration specific embodiments in which the invention may be practiced.

These embodiments are described in sufficient detail to enable those skilled in the art to practice the invention, and it is to be understood that the embodiments may be combined, or that other embodiments may be utilized and that structural, logical and electrical changes may be made without departing from the spirit and

5 scope of the present invention. The following detailed description is, therefore,
not to be taken in a limiting sense, and the scope of the present invention is
defined by the appended claims and their equivalents. In the drawings, like
10 numerals describe substantially similar components throughout the several
5 views.

This document describes, among other things, an implantable sensor,
15 such as a pressure monitor. The sensor device is implanted in a heart chamber
(or elsewhere) and wirelessly communicates information therefrom. In one
embodiment, the sensor device is capable of providing less invasive chronic
10 measurements of pressure, such as, by way of example, but not by way of
20 limitation, measurements of blood pressure in the left ventricle of the heart. The
implantable pressure monitor reduces the risk of obtaining such important
measurements, enabling a physician to more accurately diagnose and treat
25 serious heart conditions.

15 System Overview

Figure 1 is a schematic diagram illustrating generally, by way of
example, but not by way of limitation, one embodiment of portions of a sensor
30 system, such as pressure monitor system 100, and one environment in which
system 100 is used. In Figure 1, system 100 includes a sensor device, such as an
20 implantable pressure monitor device 105. Device 105 is introduced into a living
organism, such as in a heart chamber or other organ or body cavity. Miniature
35 implantable device 105 is capable of measuring internal body pressure, such as
in humans or animals. Aspects of one embodiment of device 105 and its
operation are described in Brockway et al. U.S. Patent No. 4,846,191 entitled
25 "Device For Chronic Measurement of Internal Body Pressure," which is assigned
to the assignee of the present application, and which is incorporated herein by
reference in its entirety.

In Figure 1, device 105 is implanted in a heart 110 of a human patient
45 115. Heart 110 includes several heart chambers, such as a right atrium 120, a
30 right ventricle 125, a left atrium 130, and a left ventricle 135. In this particular
example, device 105 is implanted, using a placement catheter, inside left
50 ventricle 135 where it is stabilized, such as by securing the device 105 to an
interior wall of left ventricle 135. However, in other embodiments, device 105 is

5 implanted in one of the right atrium 120, right ventricle 125, left atrium 130, or
within other organs or body cavities. Device 105 can be introduced into the
body translumenally (e.g., transvenously or transarterially), endoscopically,
10 laparoscopically, or otherwise (e.g., during open heart surgery).

5 In this embodiment, system 100 also includes an implantable or external
receiver 140 or other receiver, transceiver, transponder, or communication
device. Device 105 wirelessly communicates pressure information from the
15 organ in which device 105 is located, such as by using radio telemetry or any
other wireless communication technique. In Figure 1, left ventricular blood
10 pressure information is communicated by device 105 and received by an external
receiver 140 worn by the patient. In one embodiment, receiver 140 includes a
memory or recording device for storing the pressure information received from
20 device 105. In a further embodiment, receiver 140 includes a real time clock for
time-stamping the pressure information with the time at which the information is
25 received at receiver 140.

Figure 2 is a schematic diagram illustrating generally, by way of
example, but not by way of limitation, another embodiment of portions of
30 system 100. In Figure 2, pressure information that was stored in the memory or
recording device of receiver 140 is transferred into computer 200, such as via an
20 electrical coupling cable 205, or alternatively via optical communication, or
using any other wired or wireless communication technique. In one
35 embodiment, computer 200 includes a processor for performing statistical or
other signal processing or analysis of the pressure information. In another
embodiment, computer 200 includes a display 202 for allowing the physician or
25 other care giver to review and analyze the pressure data. In one example, display
202 includes diagnostic indicators based on analysis of the pressure data by
computer 200. In a further embodiment, computer 200 includes a memory for
archival of raw or processed pressure information. For example, the pressure
45 information can be electronically appended to the patient's medical record in a
30 computer database.

Implantable Pressure Monitor

50 Figure 3A is a schematic/block diagram illustrating generally, by way of
example, but not by way of limitation, one embodiment of device 105. In this

embodiment, device 105 includes a housing 300 carrying a sensor, such as pressure transducer 305, and a communication circuit 310. Housing 300 is adapted for implantation in a living organism such as a human or animal. In one example, housing 300 is implanted within a body cavity or an organ, such as within a heart chamber (e.g., left ventricle 135) of heart 110.

In one embodiment, device 105 includes a stabilizer 312A extending outward from housing 300 to stabilize or secure device 105 at a particular location in the heart chamber or other organ in which device 105 is implanted. Figure 3A illustrates a corkscrew stabilizer 312A which, in one embodiment, includes a solid coiled needle extending longitudinally outward from housing 300. By rotating device 105, corkscrew stabilizer 312A is screwed into the wall of the heart chamber or other organ in which device 105 is disposed, thereby securing device 105 at a particular location in the body. The corkscrew stabilizer 312A is used with or without one or more barbs. The barbs are located, for example, at a tip distal from device 105, or at different locations along the helical length of stabilizer 312A. In one embodiment, the surface of corkscrew stabilizer 312A is coated or otherwise prepared to promote the growth of fibrotic tissue to reliably secure device 105 to the heart wall or other desired location.

Figure 3B illustrates generally one embodiment of a harpoon stabilizer 312B, providing an approximately straight outward extension from housing 300, and including a barb or hook at its distal tip. Figure 3C illustrates generally one embodiment of a mesh stabilizer 312C, extending outward from or integrally formed with housing 300. Mesh stabilizer 312C also promotes the ingrowth of adjacent fibrous tissue to assist in securing device 105 at a particular location.

Figure 3D illustrates generally one embodiment of a flexible or expanding deformable stabilizer 312D. In one embodiment, stabilizer 312D is made of a flexible, spring-like, or deformable material or a "memory metal." As illustrated in Figure 3D, stabilizer 312D maintains a compact shape during implantation, but deforms or expands in profile after device 105 is implanted into the heart chamber or other body cavity. As a result of this deformation or expansion, stabilizer 312D tends to hold device 105 within the body cavity in which it is implanted. The above-discussed stabilizers 312 can also be used in combination with each other, such as illustrated in Figure 3C.

5 Figures 3A - 3D illustrate particular embodiments of device 105 in which
the internal pressure of the organ is provided to pressure transducer 305 via a
pressure communication apparatus such as, by way of example, but not by way
10 of limitation, a flexible or rigid pressure transmitting catheter (PTC) 315. In one
5 embodiment, pressure transmitting catheter 315 senses a pressure at one or more
pressure-sensitive mechanisms (c.g., a diaphragm, gel-like cap, or other
compliant structure) at its distal tip 320. Pressure transmitting catheter 315
15 communicates the pressure, via a bore, shaft, or lumen 325, to its proximal end
330 that interfaces with transducer 305. Lumen 325 extends substantially
10 between distal tip 320 and proximal end 330 of pressure transmitting catheter
315. In one embodiment, lumen 325 is filled with a pressure-transmitting
20 medium, such as a fluid of any viscosity, a gel-like material, a combination of
fluid and gel-like material, or any other flowable medium. In one embodiment,
by way of example, but not by way of limitation, distal tip 320 includes a
25 15 biocompatible and pressure-transmitting gel cap for transmitting substantially
steady-state and/or very low frequency pressure variations, and distal tip 320
also includes a thin-wall compliant structure for transmitting pressure variations
30 at higher frequencies. Lumen 325 is filled with a pressure-transmitting fluid
retained within lumen 325 by the gel cap. The gel cap also prevents body fluids
20 from entering lumen 325. Similarly, in one embodiment, proximal end 330
includes one or more pressure-transmitting mechanisms (e.g., a diaphragm, gel-
35 like cap, or other compliant structure), which also retains the pressure-
transmitting fluid in lumen 325. Although one embodiment of device 105
includes pressure transmitting catheter 315, the technique of communicating
40 25 pressure to pressure transducer 305 is not limited to using pressure transmitting
catheter 315. For example, device 105 alternatively provides a pressure
transmitting mechanism that is integrally formed with housing 300 of device 105
rather than extending outwardly therefrom. Other embodiments of device 105
45 include the use of any other technique of receiving pressure at pressure
30 transducer 305.

Pressure transducer 305 receives the pressure communicated by pressure
50 transmitting catheter 315, or by any other pressure communication mechanism,
at the interface at its proximal end 330. In response, pressure transducer 305

5 provides an electrical pressure signal that includes pressure information, such as steady-state pressure or variations in pressure. In one embodiment, pressure transducer 305 includes a semiconductor resistive strain gauge, the resistance of
10 which varies according to the pressure communicated by pressure transmitting catheter 315. Transducer 305 is electrically coupled to communication circuit 310 and provides the electrical pressure signal to communication circuit 310.

15 Communication Techniques

Communication circuit 310 wirelessly transmits pressure information from device 105 to remote receiver 140 (or other receiver, transceiver,
10 transponder, or communication device) by radio telemetry or any other wireless data communication technique. In one embodiment, communication circuit 310 includes or is coupled to an antenna for wireless communication. However, the antenna need not be located within communication circuit 310. In another
20 embodiment, communication circuit 310 also includes signal processing circuits, such as amplification and filtering circuits that process the electrical pressure
25 signal received from pressure transducer 305, or analog-to-digital conversion circuits, or a microprocessor or other circuit for performing data analysis or data compression. In a further embodiment, communication circuit 310 also includes
30 a memory device for storing the pressure information, other data, or operating parameters of device 105. In yet another embodiment, communication circuit 310 includes a real-time clock for time-stamping the pressure information.

35 In one embodiment, at least one of communication circuit 310 or transducer 305 is powered by an internal power source such as a lithium or other suitable battery 335. In another embodiment, communication circuit 310 is a
40 passive transponder that is not powered by an internal power source. Instead, communication circuit 310 receives energy wirelessly from a remote source, such as an energy source external to the body of the patient in which device 105 is implanted. Communication circuit 310 is powered by the energy that it
45 receives wirelessly from the external source. In another embodiment, battery 335 is rechargeable and device 105 includes an energy reception circuit that is
50 coupled to battery 335. The energy reception circuit in device 105 wirelessly receives energy from a remote source, such as an energy source that is external to the body of the patient in which device 105 is implanted. The energy that is

5 received by the energy reception circuit in device 105 is used by the energy
reception circuit to recharge battery 335.

10 In one example of passive transponder technology, communication
circuit 310 includes a first inductance, such as a coil. A second inductance, such
5 as a coil, is placed outside the body, for example, at a location that is close to the
site of the implanted device. The first and second inductances are inductively
15 coupled for wireless energy transmission from the external second inductance to
the implanted first inductance, and for wireless data communication from the
implanted first inductance to the external second inductance. System 100 may
10 incorporate other passive transponder techniques as well.

20 In one embodiment, communication circuit 310 wirelessly communicates
pressure information from device 105 to external remote receiver 140 using an
intracorporeal conductive communication device (also referred to as "near-field
intrabody communication" or a "personal area network"). In this document,
25 wireless communication refers to any communication technique that does not use
a wire or optical fiber. Wireless communication includes either or both of
unidirectional and/or bidirectional communication. The unidirectional or
30 bidirectional communication is carried out between any combination of
implanted and/or external communication devices. In various embodiments,
20 certain ones of the communication devices are carried by implanted sensor
devices (such as an implanted pressure monitor), implanted medical devices
35 (such as an implanted cardiac rhythm management device), and external
communication devices for communication therebetween. Wireless
communication includes, but is not limited to: radio telemetry, reactive
40 coupling, and intracorporeal conductive communication. In this document,
intracorporeal conductive communication refers to any communication technique
that uses a living organism (e.g., the body of a human or animal) as a conductor
for communicating data. In one embodiment, wireless communication is used to
45 program operating parameters in implanted device 105.

30 In one example of an intracorporeal conductive communication device,
communication circuit 310 is electrically coupled to electrodes located on
housing 300 and insulated from each other. Communication circuit 310
50 capacitively couples a very low (e.g., less than a stimulation threshold of heart

5 110) displacement current that is conducted through the body to remote receiver
140. The current is modulated with a data signal. The data signal includes the
pressure information or other data to be wirelessly communicated from the
10 implanted medical device 105. In this embodiment, the resulting current is
5 detected at remote receiver 140 by electrodes that contact the body of patient 115
during the wireless communication from device 105. The detected current is
15 demodulated to obtain the pressure information or other data. The use of
intracorporeal conductive communication techniques is described in
Coppersmith et al. U.S. Patent No. 5,796,827 entitled "System and Method for
10 Near-Field Human-Body Coupling For Encrypted Communication With
Identification Cards," and in T.G. Zimmerman, "Personal Area Networks: Near-
20 field intrabody communication," IBM Systems Journal, Vol. 35, No. 3 & 4,
1996, each of which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

25 In one embodiment, system 100 includes, among other things,
15 communicating information from any implanted medical device to an external
remote receiver 140 using intracorporeal conductive communication (i.e., using
the body as a conductor). Examples of such implanted medical devices include,
30 but are not limited to: pressure monitors, cardiac pacemakers, defibrillators,
drug-delivery devices, and cardiac rhythm management devices.

20 Figure 4 is a schematic diagram illustrating generally, by way of
example, but not by way of limitation, one embodiment of system 100 using
35 either unidirectional or bidirectional intracorporeal conductive communication
between an implanted medical device, such as cardiac rhythm management
device 400, and an external remote receiver 140. This includes, for example,
40 25 intracorporeal conductive communication of data from electrodes 405A-B at the
cardiac rhythm management device 400 to electrodes 410A-B at the external
remote receiver 140, as well as programming operating parameters of cardiac
rhythm management device 400 based on instructions received via intracorporeal
45 conductive communication from external remote receiver 140.

30 Figure 5 is a schematic diagram illustrating generally, by way of
example, but not by way of limitation, another embodiment of system 100 using
50 either unidirectional or bidirectional intracorporeal conductive communication
between electrodes 505A-B at pressure monitor device 105, which is implanted

5 in left ventricle 135, and electrodes 405A-B coupled to an implanted remote receiver 140 carried by an implanted medical device, such as by cardiac rhythm management device 400. In one embodiment, cardiac rhythm management
10 device 400 includes a therapy generator that is coupled to heart 110 through a leadwire. In this embodiment, device 105 senses left ventricular blood pressure and communicates, via intracorporeal conductive communication, left ventricular blood pressure information to cardiac rhythm management device 400 where it is received by implanted receiver 140. Based on the received pressure information, cardiac rhythm management device 400 adjusts therapy delivered to heart 110.
15 In one example, cardiac rhythm management device 400 is a pacemaker or pacemaker/defibrillator that adjusts the rate of delivering electrical pacing pulses to heart 110 via leadwire 500 based on the left ventricular pressure information received from device 105. In another example, cardiac rhythm management device 400 is a defibrillator or pacemaker/defibrillator that delivers
20 antitachyarrhythmia therapy to heart 110 based on the left ventricular pressure information received from device 105. Similarly, system 100 includes using intracorporeal conductive communication to transmit information to device 105 from another implanted medical device, such as cardiac rhythm management device 400. Moreover, the embodiments described with respect to Figures 4 and
25 5 can be combined for communication between any of one or more implanted medical devices, one or more implanted sensor devices such as device 105, and/or one or more external or implanted remote receivers 140.

Implantation and Use

Figure 6 is a cross-sectional schematic diagram illustrating generally, by way of example, but not by way of limitation, one embodiment of a placement catheter 600 for implantably disposing device 105 in a heart chamber, such as left ventricle 135. Catheter 600 includes an at least partially flexible elongate member having a proximal end 600A that is manipulated by the user. Catheter 600 also includes a distal end 600B of the elongate member that is inserted in the
40 patient 115. In one embodiment, the distal end 600B of catheter 600 includes a cavity 605 carrying at least a portion of device 105. Cavity 605 is circumferentially encompassed by a sheath 607 that, in one embodiment, is open at distal end 600B of catheter 600.
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Catheter 600 also includes at least one engaging member, such as plunger 610. Plunger 610 engages device 105. In one example, an inner surface of plunger 610 includes protrusions, such as pins 615, that engage receptacles 620 or other indentations in housing 300 of device 105. Plunger 610 is controlled at proximal end 600A of catheter 600 by a manipulator, such as handle 625. Handle 625 is coupled to plunger 610 by a coupling member 630, such as one or more rods or cables extending longitudinally within catheter 600. Plunger 610 is capable of longitudinal motion toward and away from distal end 600B of catheter 600, so that device 105 can be advanced from or retracted toward cavity 605. Plunger 610 is also capable of rotational motion, by manipulating handle 625, so that corkscrew stabilizer 312A can be rotatably screwed into tissue such as the heart wall. Pins 615 engage receptacles 620 to ensure that device 105 rotates together with plunger 610.

In one embodiment, catheter 600 also includes a safety tether 635, which is looped through an opening or other feature in housing 300 of device 105. Tether 635 extends longitudinally through catheter 600 toward proximal end 600A, where the looped tether 635 is knotted or otherwise secured at a tether keep 640 on handle 625 or elsewhere. Tether 635 secures device 105 to catheter 600 until final release of device 105 is desired, at which time tether 635 is cut.

In another embodiment, catheter 600 includes a convex cap 640 at distal end 600B. Convex cap 640 eases the transluminal travel of catheter 600 through a blood vessel or other constriction. In one example, cap 640 is hinged to catheter 600, such as at sheath 607, so that cap 640 opens outwardly from distal end 600B when device 105 is pushed out of cavity 605. In another example, cap 640 includes one or more deformable flaps that similarly open outwardly to allow device 105 to be advanced out from cavity 605 by pushing device 105 against cap 640. In a further embodiment, cap 640 includes a material that is soluble in body fluids after a predetermined time period. In this embodiment, cap 640 dissolves after catheter 600 is transluminally guided to left ventricle 135 or other desired location. After cap 640 dissolves, device 105 is advanced longitudinally outward from cavity 605 at distal end 600B of catheter 600. In another embodiment of the invention, cap 640 is omitted such that cavity 605 is open to distal end 600B of catheter 600 even during transluminal insertion.

5 In one example, catheter 600 is used to place device 105 in a heart chamber, such as left ventricle 135. One such technique includes inserting catheter 600 into the patient 115, such as via the subclavian artery. Catheter 600 is translumenally guided through the artery, through the left atrium, and through the mitral valve until its distal end 600B is within left ventricle 135. Progress of the catheter 600, as it travels from the insertion point to the left ventricle 135, is typically monitored on a display using fluoroscopy. This assists the physician in translumenally steering catheter 600 along the proper path to a desired location in left ventricle 135. In the embodiment of device 105 illustrated in Figure 3A, which includes a corkscrew stabilizer 312A, sheath 607 and/or cap 640 prevents the sharp tip of corkscrew stabilizer 312A from damaging the blood vessel while device 105 is being translumenally maneuvered through the blood vessel.

In one embodiment, placement catheter 600 has high torsional stability and is steerable. In this embodiment, sheath 607 and portions of catheter 600 near its distal end 600B are substantially rigid. Catheter 600 is adapted for receiving, at its proximal end 600A, a removable stylet that extends longitudinally along catheter 600. The stylet extends approximately to (or slightly beyond) a distal end of coupling member 630. A straight stylet is typically employed until distal end 600B of catheter 600 enters heart 110. Then, the straight stylet is removed from catheter 600 and a stylet having a curved or bent distal end is inserted in its place. By rotating the bent stylet as catheter 600 is advanced into heart 110, the distal end 600B of catheter 600 is directed to the desired location in left ventricle 135 or other heart chamber.

When device 105 is positioned at a desired location in left ventricle 135, plunger 610 is advanced slightly so that corkscrew stabilizer 312A protrudes outwardly from cavity 605 and contacts the heart wall in the interior of left ventricle 135. Handle 625 is rotated which, in turn, rotates plunger 610 together with device 105, such that corkscrew stabilizer 312A is screwed into the heart wall to secure device 105 in position (e.g., at the apex of left ventricle 135 or other desired location). After securing device 105, plunger 610 is advanced further. Plunger 610 is designed to open outwardly when it is extended outside of sheath 607. As a result, pins 615 disengage from receptacles 620, releasing the grip of plunger 610 on device 105. Tether 635 is then cut (at proximal end

5 600A of catheter 600) and removed, thereby releasing device 105. Catheter 600 is then withdrawn from the subclavian artery.

10 Figure 7 is a schematic diagram illustrating generally, by way of example, but not by way of limitation, another embodiment of device 105 and an environment in which it is used. In Figure 7, housing 300 of device 105 is
5 substantially implanted within the myocardium at the interior wall of left ventricle 135 of heart 110. The pressure transmitting catheter 315 portion of device 105 extends outwardly from housing 300 into left ventricle 135 for
15 sensing blood pressure its distal tip 320. In this embodiment, deformable stabilizer 312D is integrated with a sharpened end of housing 300 so that
10 housing 300 can be advanced into the heart wall. Then, the deformable stabilizer 312D is expanded in a spring-like fashion to secure device 105 at the desired location. Device 105 is implanted using a placement catheter 600 as described
20 with respect to Figure 6. In one embodiment, housing 300 is designed to promote fibrous ingrowth, such as by properly preparing housing 300 with a
25 coating and/or surface roughening, or by incorporating a mesh or fabric into the outer surface of housing 300.

30 Figure 8 is a schematic diagram illustrating generally, by way of example, but not by way of limitation, another embodiment of device 105 that is
20 capable of being implanted substantially within the interior wall of left ventricle 135 of heart 110. In this embodiment, device 105 includes a helical anchor 800 surrounding a portion of device 105. In one embodiment, anchor 800 includes a
35 highly elastic metal such as, for example, a memory metal such as nitinol. A spring constant of anchor 800 is low enough to allow anchor 800 to conform to
40 housing 300 of device 105 while torsional force is being applied to insert device 105 into the myocardial tissue 805 or other tissue. Upon release of this torsional force, anchor 800 deforms, such as, for example, by returning to its original
45 shape. This results in the application of force to the surrounding myocardial tissue 805 for securing a portion of device 105 to the tissue. In one embodiment,
30 more than one anchor 800 is included such as, for example, an anchor 800 at both proximal end 300A and distal end 300B of housing 300 of device 105. In
50 another embodiment, housing 300 of device 105 includes a head 810 portion at proximal end 300A. Head 810 limits the advance of device 105 within

5 myocardial tissue 805. This ensures that device 105 has access to the left
ventricle 135 or other heart chamber to allow accurate blood pressure
10 measurements in the heart chamber. This also reduces the risk of fibrous tissue
growing over the pressure-sensitive portion of device 105, such as pressure
5 transmitting catheter 315.

15 Figure 9 is a schematic diagram illustrating generally, by way of
example, but not by way of limitation, another embodiment of device 105 that is
capable of being implanted substantially within myocardial tissue 805. In this
embodiment, device 105 includes a substantially rigid nonmetal metal coil (e.g., a
10 titanium coil) anchor 800 surrounding a portion of housing 300 of device 105.
20 Anchor 800 has a profile similar to that of device 105, as illustrated in Figure 9.
Upon application of a torsional force, anchor 800 screws into the heart wall. In
another embodiment, more than one anchor 800 is included such as, for example,
an anchor 800 at both proximal end 800A and distal end 800B.

25 Conclusion

The present system includes, among other things, a sensor device such as
a pressure monitor. The sensor device is implantable in a heart chamber or
30 elsewhere, and it wirelessly communicates sensor information therefrom. In one
embodiment, an implantable pressure monitor provides less invasive chronic
20 measurements of pressure, such as, by way of example, but not by way of
limitation, measurements of left ventricular blood pressure. The implantable
35 pressure monitor reduces the risk of obtaining such important measurements,
enabling a physician to more accurately diagnose and treat serious heart
conditions.

40 Though particular aspects of the system have been described in
conjunction with its use in measuring left ventricular blood pressure, it is
understood that the system can also be used for measuring pressure elsewhere.
For example, but not by way of limitation, the system can also be used for
45 measuring pressure in other heart chambers, blood vessels (e.g., pulmonary
artery), body organs (e.g., the bladder, kidney, uterus), or body cavities (e.g., for
30 intracranial, intraocular, or intrapleural pressure measurements). Moreover,
though transluminal implantation has been described using a placement catheter,
50 the present system also includes implantation using an endoscope, laparoscope,

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or other minimally invasive or other surgical technique. In one example, the implantable sensor device is directed into a urinary bladder via the urethra. In one such embodiment, the implantable sensor device includes a stabilizer or other structure that expands following disposition in the bladder. As a result, the implantable sensor device is retained in the bladder without blocking flow to the urethra.

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Though particular aspects of the system have been described in conjunction with its use in measuring pressure, it is understood that the system can also be used with an implantable sensor for sensing manifestations of other physical parameters such as, by way of example, but not by way of limitation, sensing blood gasses or other gasses (e.g., O₂, CO₂), pH, electrocardiograms, and blood glucose. In another example, the system is used in conjunction with ultrasonic measurements (e.g., measuring blood flow, or measuring heart wall thickness for determining contractility, etc.).

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It is to be understood that the above description is intended to be illustrative, and not restrictive. Many other embodiments will be apparent to those of skill in the art upon reviewing the above description. The scope of the invention should, therefore, be determined with reference to the appended claims, along with the full scope of equivalents to which such claims are entitled.

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Claims

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WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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1. An apparatus for sensing a parameter in a heart chamber in a heart in a living organism, the apparatus comprising:

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a sensor, adapted for being disposed in the heart chamber, the sensor providing a sensor signal based on the parameter in the heart chamber; and

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a wireless communication circuit, adapted for being disposed in the heart chamber, the communication circuit being coupled to the sensor and transmitting information out of the heart chamber based on the sensor signal.

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2. The apparatus of claim 1, in which the communication circuit is selected from the group consisting essentially of: a radio-telemetry circuit, a first inductance adapted for inductive coupling to a second inductance located outside the organ, a passive transponder, and an intracorporeal conductive communication device.

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3. The apparatus of claim 1, in which the sensor includes a pressure transducer.

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4. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising:
a housing carrying the sensor and the communication circuit; and
at least one stabilizer that is coupled to the housing.

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5. The apparatus of claim 4, in which the stabilizer is adapted for securing the housing to a portion of the heart chamber, and the stabilizer is selected from the group consisting essentially of: a mesh that is adapted for receiving a growth of fibrous tissue from the heart chamber, a coating that is adapted for receiving a growth of fibrous tissue from the heart chamber, a corkscrew extending longitudinally from the housing, a helical anchor encompassing at least a portion of the housing, a harpoon, a threaded member, a hook, a barb, a fastener, and a suture.

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6. The apparatus of claim 4, in which the stabilizer includes a deformable member that is adapted for stabilizing the housing within the heart chamber.

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7. The apparatus of claim 6, in which the deformable member includes a memory metal.

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8. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising:
a housing carrying the sensor and the communication circuit; and
a battery carried by the housing.

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9. The method of claim 8, in which the battery is rechargeable and further comprising an energy reception circuit coupled to the battery, the energy reception circuit adapted for receiving energy from outside the heart chamber for recharging the battery.

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10. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising:
a housing carrying the sensor and the communication circuit; and
a signal processing circuit in the housing, the signal processing circuit being coupled to the sensor to receive the sensor signal, the signal processing circuit being coupled to the communication circuit to provide a signal-processed sensor signal to the communication circuit.

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11. The apparatus of claim 1, in which the heart chamber is selected from the group consisting essentially of a right atrium, a right ventricle, a left atrium, and a left ventricle.

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12. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a receiver, external to the heart chamber, that is communicatively coupled to the communication circuit for receiving the information based on the sensor signal.

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13. The apparatus of claim 12, in which the receiver is implanted in the living organism.

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14. The apparatus of claim 12, in which the receiver is external to the living organism.

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15. The apparatus of claim 12, further comprising a cardiac rhythm management device, implanted in the living organism and coupled to the receiver.

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16. The apparatus of claim 12, further comprising a computer that is communicatively coupled to the receiver for receiving the pressure information.

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17. The apparatus of claim 12, further comprising a cardiac rhythm management device, communicatively coupled to receive the information from the wireless communication circuit, the cardiac rhythm management device delivering therapy to the heart based on the sensor signal.

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18. A cardiac rhythm management device, communicatively coupled to a plurality of the apparatuses of claim 1.

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19. A cardiac rhythm management device comprising:

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a therapy circuit;

a leadwire coupled to the therapy circuit; and

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an apparatus for sensing a parameter in a heart chamber in a heart in a living organism, the apparatus comprising:

a sensor, adapted for being disposed in the heart chamber, the

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sensor providing a sensor signal based on the parameter in the heart chamber; and

a wireless communication circuit, adapted for being disposed in the heart chamber, the communication circuit being coupled to the sensor and transmitting information out of the heart chamber based on the sensor signal.

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20. An apparatus for measuring a pressure in a heart chamber, the apparatus comprising:

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5 a pressure transducer, adapted for being disposed in the heart chamber,
the pressure transducer providing a pressure signal based on the pressure in the
heart chamber; and

10 a wireless communication circuit, adapted for being disposed in the heart
5 chamber, the communication circuit being coupled to the pressure transducer and
transmitting pressure information out of the heart chamber based on the pressure
signal.

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21. The apparatus of claim 20, in which the heart chamber is selected from
10 the group consisting essentially of a right atrium, a right ventricle, a left atrium,
and a left ventricle.

22. An apparatus for measuring a blood pressure in a heart chamber in a heart
25 in a living organism, the apparatus comprising:

15 a housing adapted for being disposed in the heart chamber;
a pressure transducer, adapted for being disposed in the heart chamber,
the pressure transducer providing a pressure signal based on the blood pressure
30 in the heart chamber;
a wireless communication circuit, carried by the housing and coupled to
20 the pressure transducer, the communication circuit transmitting pressure
information out of the heart chamber based on the pressure signal; and
35 at least one stabilizer, coupled to the housing, and adapted for stabilizing
the housing within the heart chamber.

40 23. The apparatus of claim 22, in which the communication circuit is selected
from the group consisting essentially of: a radio-telemetry circuit, a first
inductance adapted for inductive coupling to a second inductance located outside
the organ, a passive transponder, and an intracorporeal conductive
45 communication device.

30 24. The apparatus of claim 22, further comprising a pressure transmission
catheter adapted for receiving the pressure in the heart chamber, the pressure
50 transmission catheter being coupled to the pressure transducer via a flowable

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medium to communicate the pressure in the heart chamber to the pressure transducer.

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25. The apparatus of claim 24, in which the pressure transmission catheter includes a biocompatible gel-like tip that is adapted to receive the pressure in the heart chamber.

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26. The apparatus of claim 22, in which the pressure transducer includes a semiconductor resistive strain gauge.

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27. The apparatus of claim 22, in which the stabilizer is adapted for securing the housing to a portion of the heart chamber, and the stabilizer is selected from the group consisting essentially of: a mesh that is adapted for receiving a growth of fibrous tissue from the heart chamber, a coating that is adapted for receiving a growth of fibrous tissue from the heart chamber, a corkscrew extending longitudinally from the housing, a helical anchor encompassing at least a portion of the housing, a harpoon, a threaded member, a hook, a barb, a fastener, and a suture.

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28. The apparatus of claim 22, in which the stabilizer includes a deformable member that is adapted for stabilizing the housing within the heart chamber.

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29. The apparatus of claim 28, in which the deformable member includes a memory metal.

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30. The apparatus of claim 22, further comprising a battery that is carried by the housing.

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31. The apparatus of claim 22, further comprising a signal processing circuit in the housing, the signal processing circuit being coupled to the pressure transducer to receive the pressure signal, the signal processing circuit being coupled to the communication circuit to provide a signal-processed pressure signal to the communication circuit.

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32. The apparatus of claim 22, further comprising a receiver, external to the heart chamber, that is communicatively coupled to the communication circuit for receiving the pressure information.

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5 33. The apparatus of claim 32, in which the receiver is implanted in the living organism.

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34. The apparatus of claim 32, in which the receiver is external to the living organism.

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35. The apparatus of claim 32, further comprising a cardiac rhythm management device, implanted in the living organism and coupled to the receiver.

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15 36. The apparatus of claim 32, further comprising a computer that is communicatively coupled to the receiver for receiving the pressure information.

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37. A method of sensing a parameter in a heart chamber in a heart in a living organism, the method comprising:

20 receiving a physical manifestation of the parameter in the heart chamber at a sensor device disposed within the heart chamber;

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sensing, within the heart chamber, the physical manifestation of the parameter into a sensor signal; and

wirelessly communicating information, which is based on the sensor

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25 signal, from the heart.

38. The method of claim 39, further comprising translumenally disposing the sensor device in the heart.

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30 39. The method of claim 37, in which communicating information includes radio-telemetry the information from the heart.

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40. The method of claim 37, in which communicating information includes inductively coupling the information from the heart.

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41. The method of claim 37, in which communicating information includes:
5 receiving energy from outside the heart at a passive transponder in the heart;

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powering the passive transponder from the energy received from outside the heart; and

10 transmitting information from the heart using the powered passive transponder.

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42. The method of claim 37, further comprising:

receiving energy from outside the heart; and

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15 recharging a battery located in the heart using the energy received from outside the heart.

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43. The method of claim 37, in which communicating information includes:

conducting a current through at least a portion of the living organism; and

20 receiving, at a receiver that is outside the heart chamber, a signal that is based on the current.

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44. The method of claim 37, in which communicating information includes:

conducting a current through at least a portion of the living organism; and

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25 receiving, at a receiver that is external to the living organism, a signal that is based on the current.

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45. The method of claim 37, further comprising receiving the information at a receiver that is carried by an implantable medical device located within the living organism.

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46. The method of claim 37, further comprising:
receiving the information at a receiver that is external to the living
organism; and
storing the information in a memory in the receiver.

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47. The method of claim 46, further comprising transferring the information
from the receiver to a computer.

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48. The method of claim 47, further comprising analyzing the information in
the computer.

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49. The method of claim 48, further comprising displaying to a user an
indicator based on the information.

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50. The method of claim 37, in which the heart chamber is selected from a
group consisting essentially of a right atrium, a right ventricle, a left atrium, and
a left ventricle.

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51. The method of claim 37, further comprising receiving the information at
a receiver that is carried by an cardiac rhythm management device located within
the living organism.

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52. The method of claim 51, further comprising adjusting therapy delivered
to the heart by the cardiac rhythm management device, wherein adjusting
therapy is based on the sensor signal wirelessly communicated from the heart.

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53. A method of measuring blood pressure in a heart chamber in a heart in a
living organism, the method comprising:
receiving the blood pressure in the heart chamber at a pressure transducer
device;
transducing, within the heart chamber, the blood pressure in the heart
chamber into a pressure signal; and

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wirelessly communicating blood pressure information, which is based on the pressure signal, from the heart.

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54. The method of claim 53, further comprising translumenally disposing the pressure transducer device in the heart via a placement catheter.

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55. The method of claim 53, in which receiving the blood pressure includes communicating the blood pressure from the heart chamber to the pressure transducer via a flowable medium.

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56. The method of claim 55, in which receiving the blood pressure includes receiving the blood pressure a distal end of a pressure transmission catheter and transmitting the blood pressure from the heart chamber to the pressure transducer via a flowable medium within the pressure transmission catheter.

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57. The method of claim 56, in which transducing the pressure includes: receiving the blood pressure at the pressure transducer from the flowable medium within the pressure transmission catheter; varying at least one resistance in the pressure transducer based on the received pressure; and providing a resulting electrical signal, which includes pressure information based on the varying resistance of the pressure transducer.

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58. The method of claim 53, in which communicating pressure information includes radio-telemetry the pressure information from the heart.

59. The method of claim 53, in which communicating pressure information includes inductively coupling the pressure information from the heart.

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60. The method of claim 53, in which communicating pressure information includes:

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receiving energy from outside the heart at a passive transponder;

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5 powering the passive transponder from the received energy from outside
the heart; and

10 transmitting pressure information from the heart using the powered
passive transponder.

5

61. The method of claim 53, in which communicating pressure information
includes:

15 conducting a current through at least a portion of the heart; and
receiving, at a receiver that is outside the heart, a signal that is based on
10 the current.

20

62. The method of claim 53, in which communicating pressure information
includes:

25 conducting a current through at least a portion of the heart; and
15 receiving, at a receiver that is external to the living organism, a signal
that is based on the current.

30

63. The method of claim 53, further comprising:

translumenally disposing a pressure transducer device within the heart;
20 and
stabilizing the pressure transducer device within the heart.

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64. The method of claim 63, in which stabilizing the pressure transducer
device includes securing the pressure transducer device to the heart.

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25

65. The method of claim 64, in which securing the pressure transducer to the
heart includes implanting the pressure transducer substantially within a wall of
the heart.

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66. The method of claim 53, in which the heart chamber is selected from a
group consisting essentially of a right atrium, a right ventricle, a left atrium, and
a left ventricle.

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67. The method of claim 53, further comprising:
receiving the wirelessly communicated blood pressure information at a
cardiac rhythm management device; and

10

adjusting therapy delivered to the heart by the cardiac rhythm
management device based on the wirelessly communicated blood pressure
information.

15

68. A method comprising:
inducing a current between first electrodes implanted in a living

10 organism;

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modulating the current at the first electrodes with a data signal; and
demodulating, at second electrodes, a signal based on the current.

25

69. The method of claim 68, in which the second electrodes are implanted in
the living organism.

30

70. The method of claim 68, in which the second electrodes are external to
the living organism.

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20 71. A catheter comprising:

an elongate member having first and second ends, the first end of the
elongate member including a cavity adapted for carrying an implantable
measurement device that includes a wireless communication circuit, the elongate
member also including a lumen extending substantially between the cavity and
the second end of the elongate member; and

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an engaging member, carried by the cavity and extendable outwardly
from the cavity at the first end of the elongate member, the engaging member
operatively coupled to a manipulator at the second end of the elongate member,
the engaging member adapted for engaging the implantable measurement device.

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72. The catheter of claim 71, in which the elongate member is flexible and
adapted for transluminal access to a heart chamber.

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73. The catheter of claim 72, further comprising a coupling member extending through the lumen between the engaging member and the manipulator

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74. The catheter of claim 73, further comprising a tether, adapted to be secured to the implantable measurement device, the tether extending substantially between the cavity and the manipulator.

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75. The catheter of claim 71, further comprising a convex cap coupled to the first end of the elongate member.

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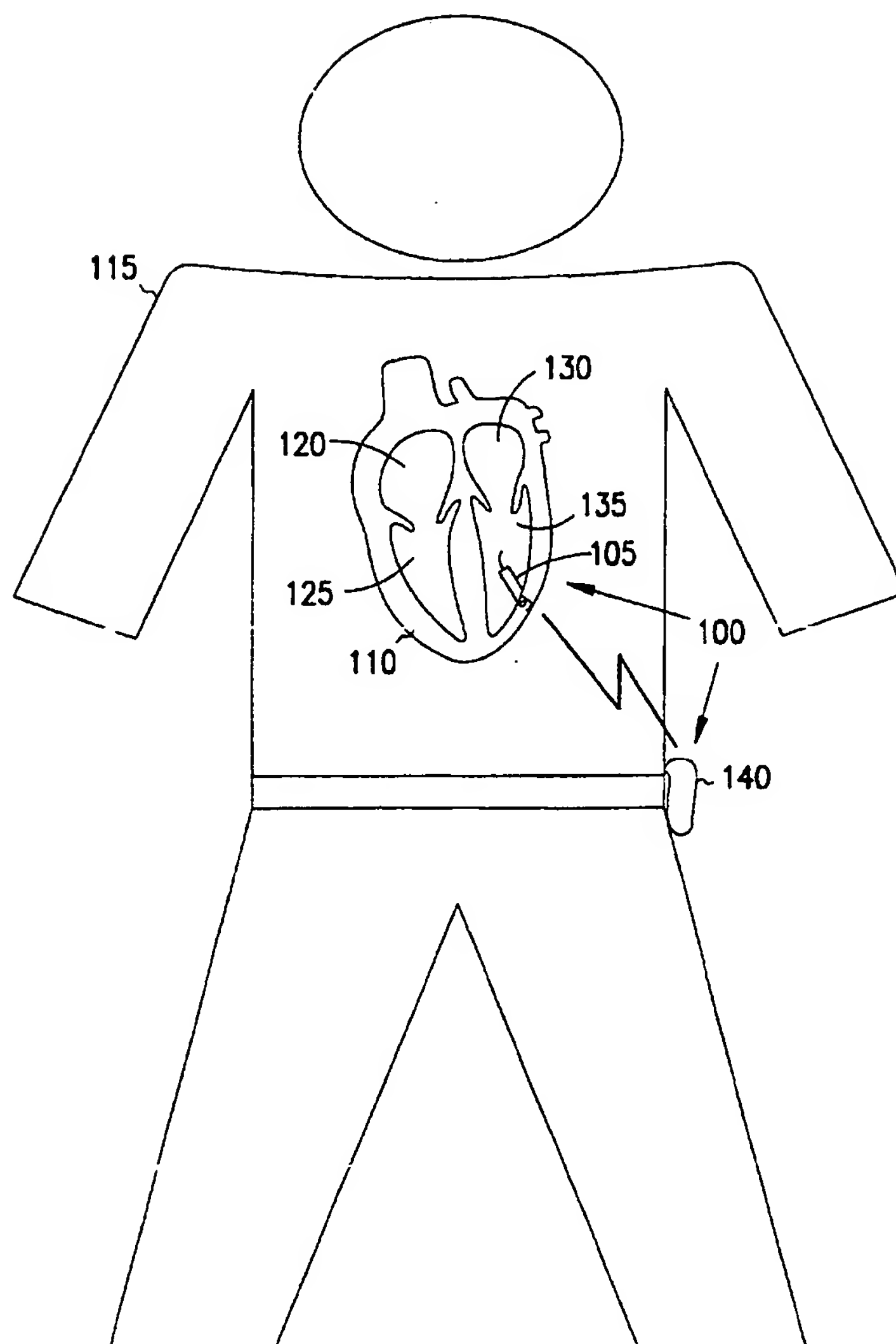


FIG. 1

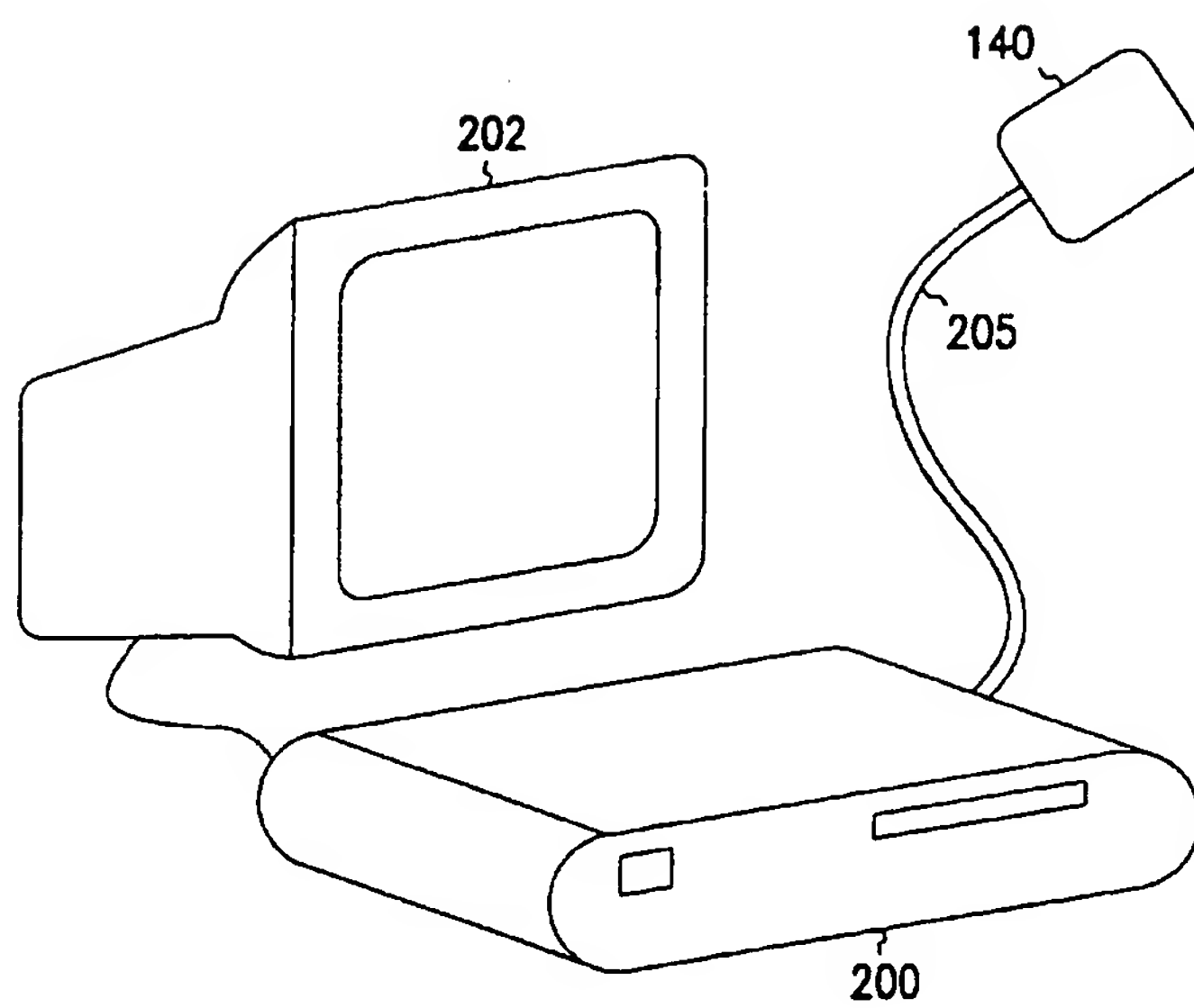


FIG. 2

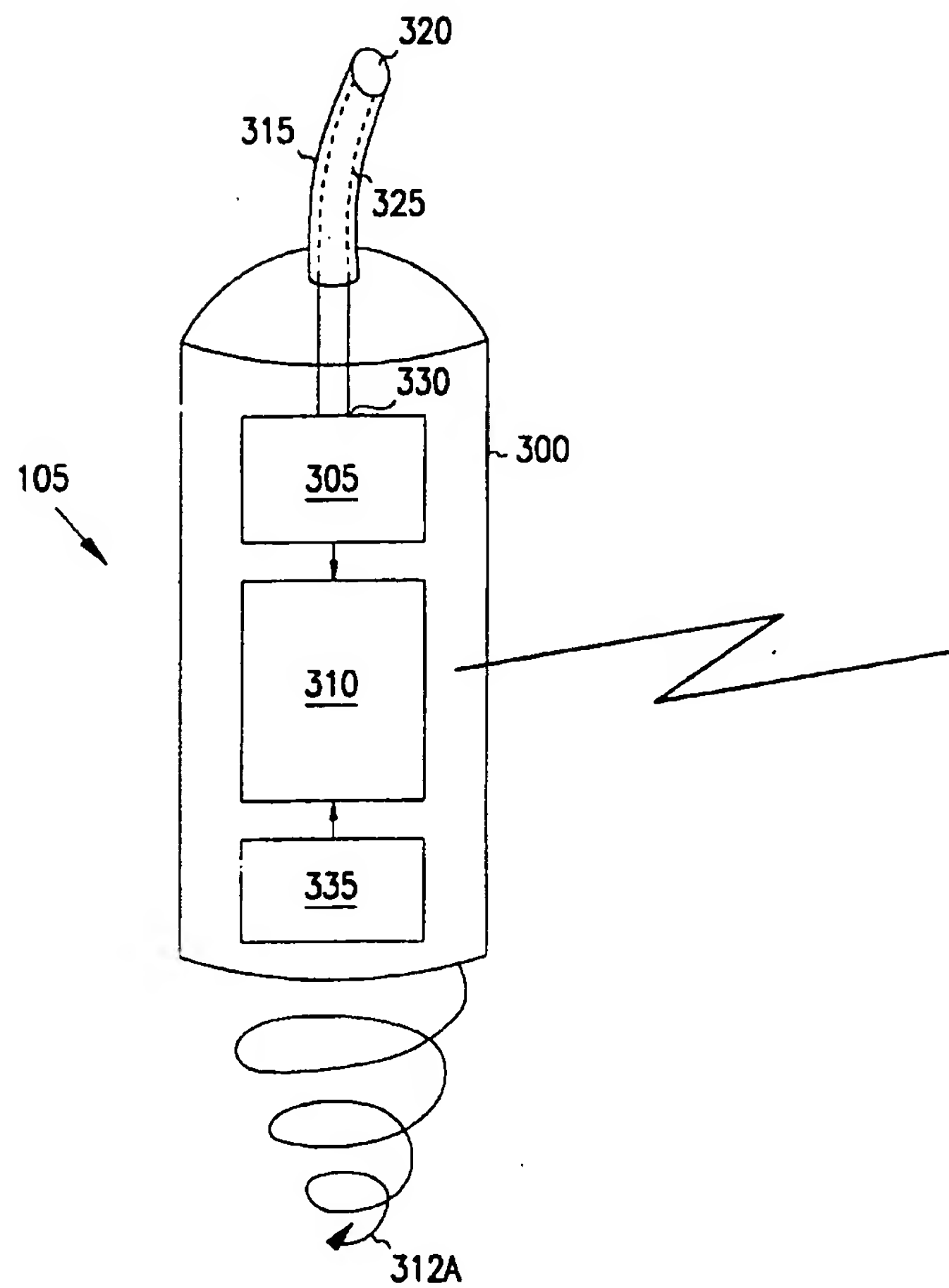


FIG. 3A

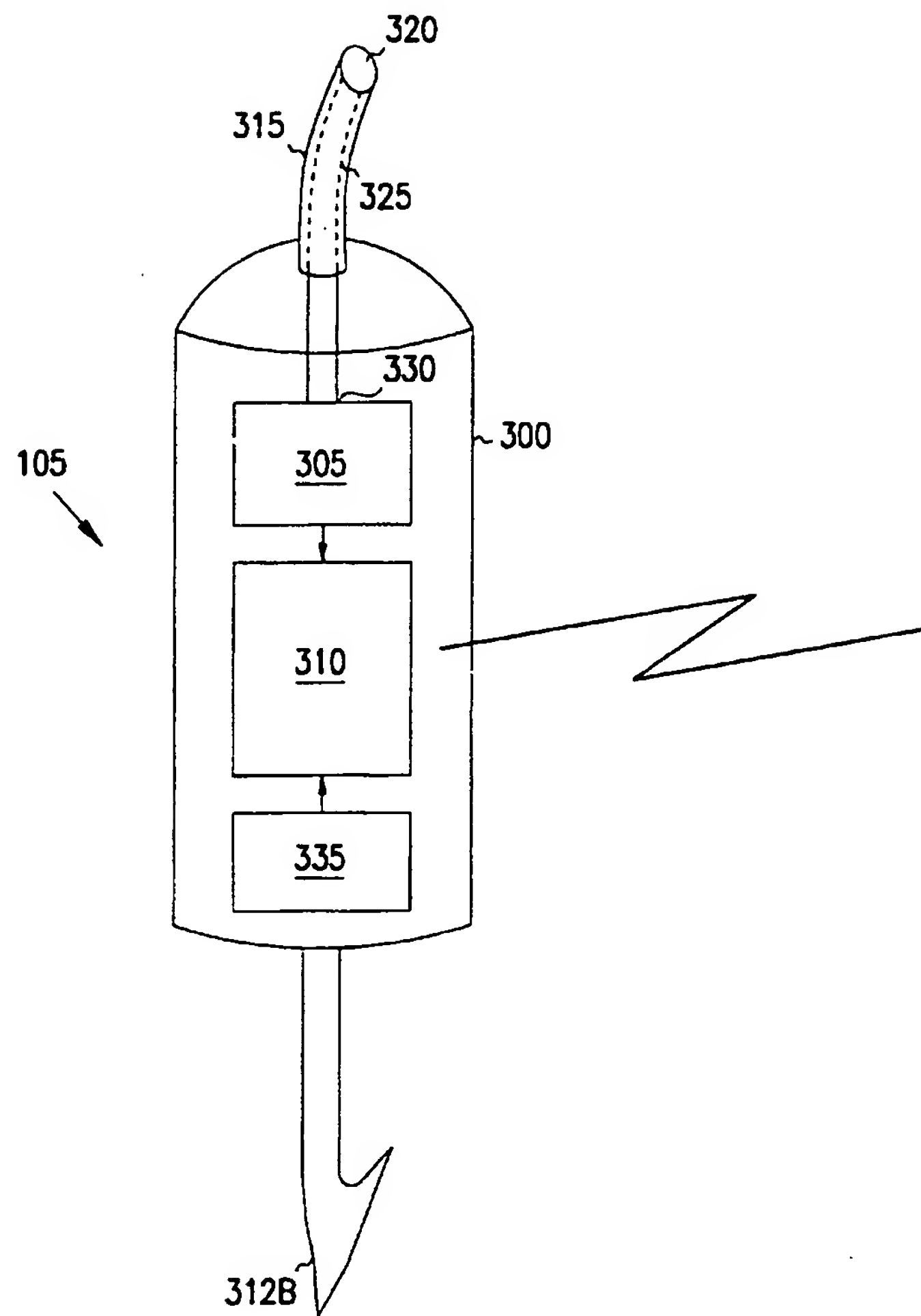


FIG. 3B

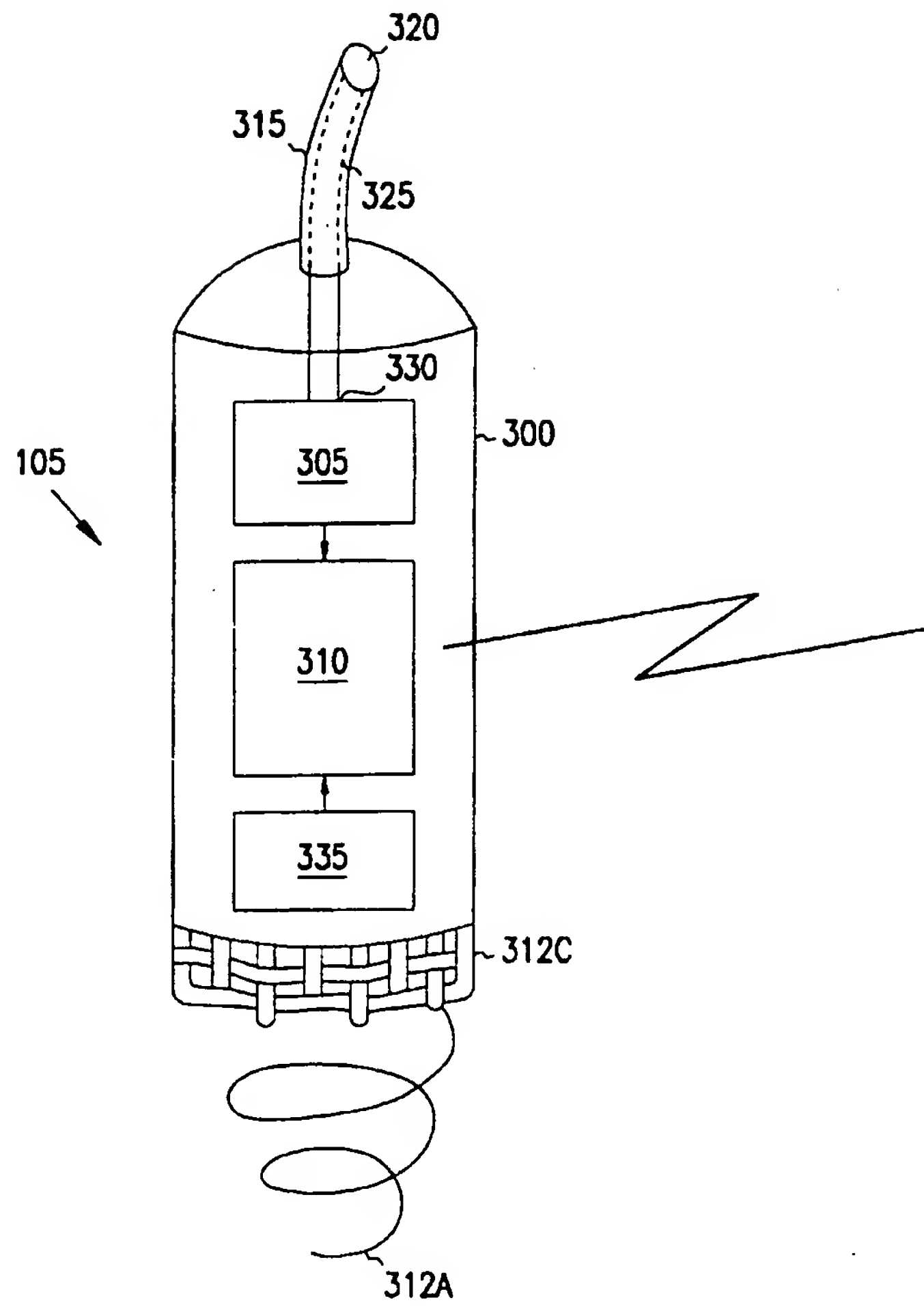


FIG. 3C

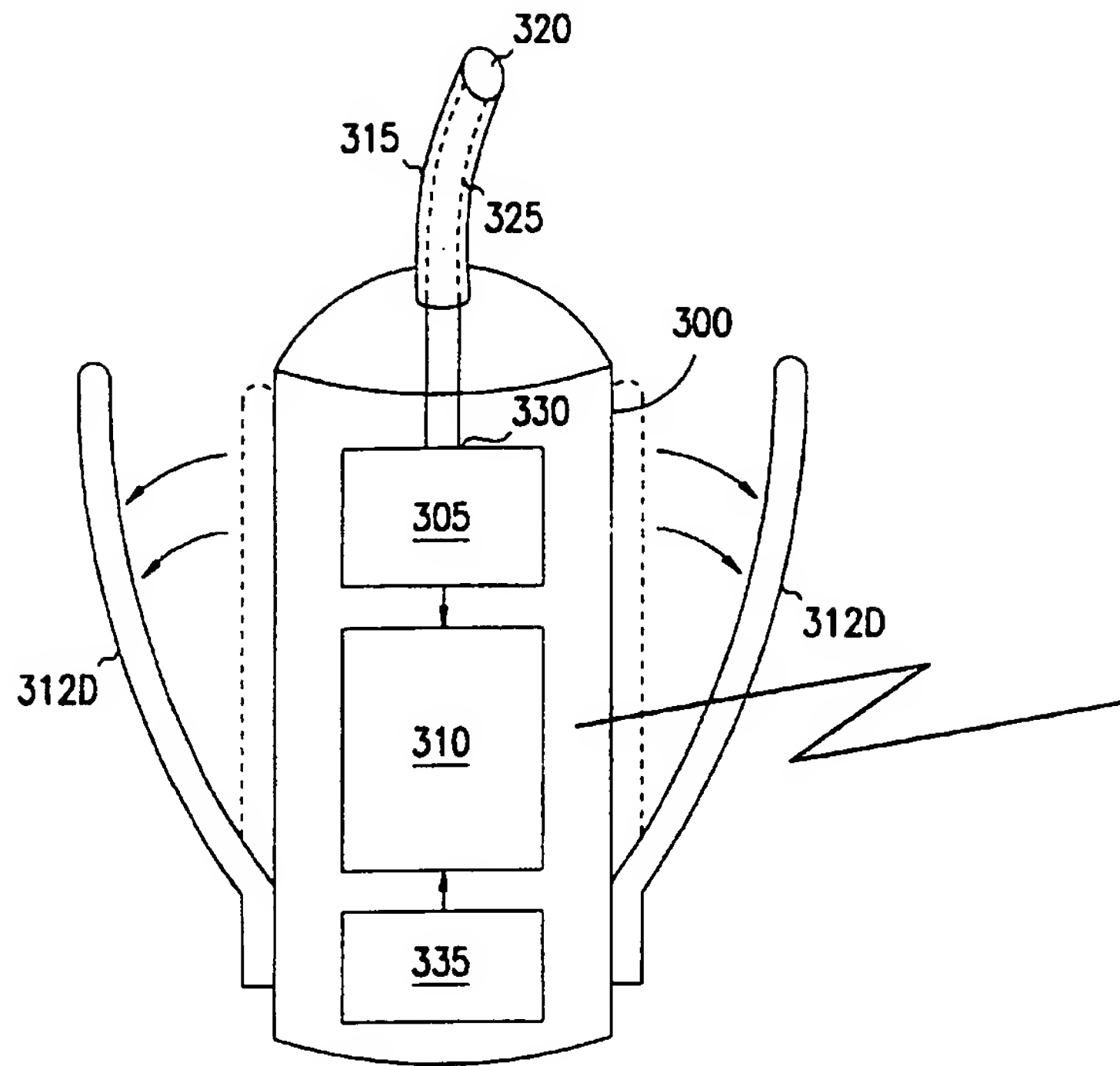


FIG. 3D

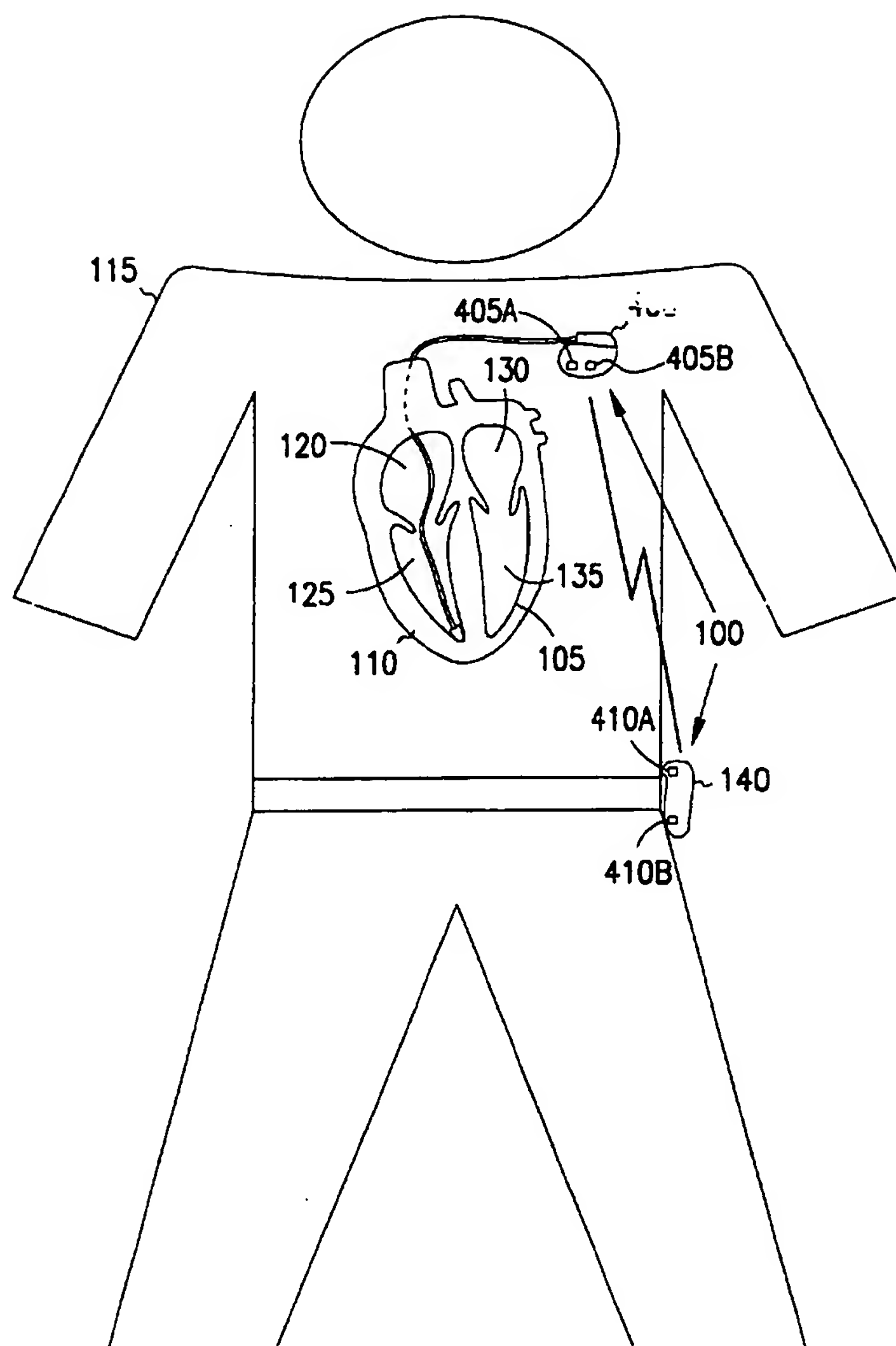


FIG. 4

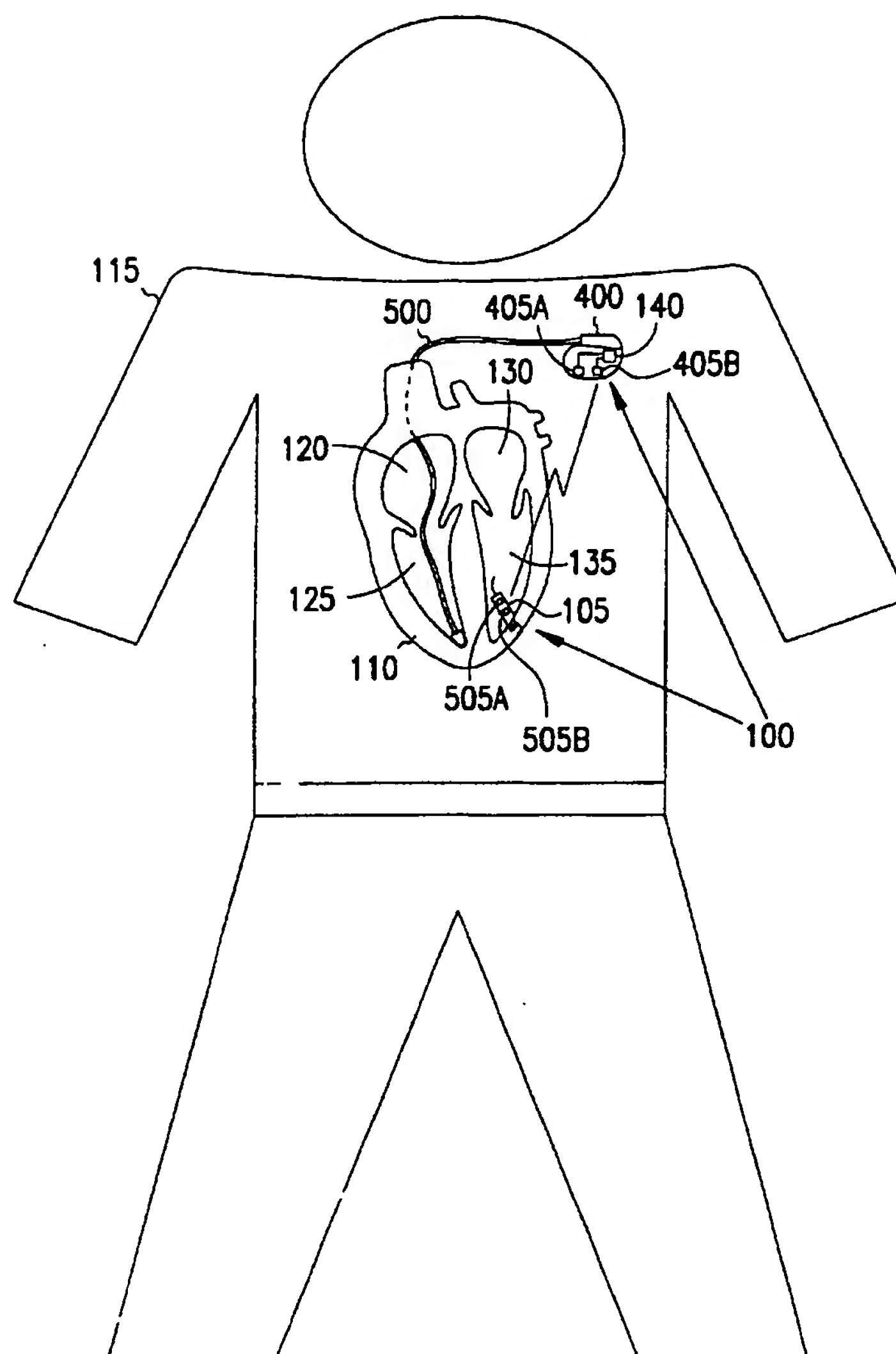


FIG. 5

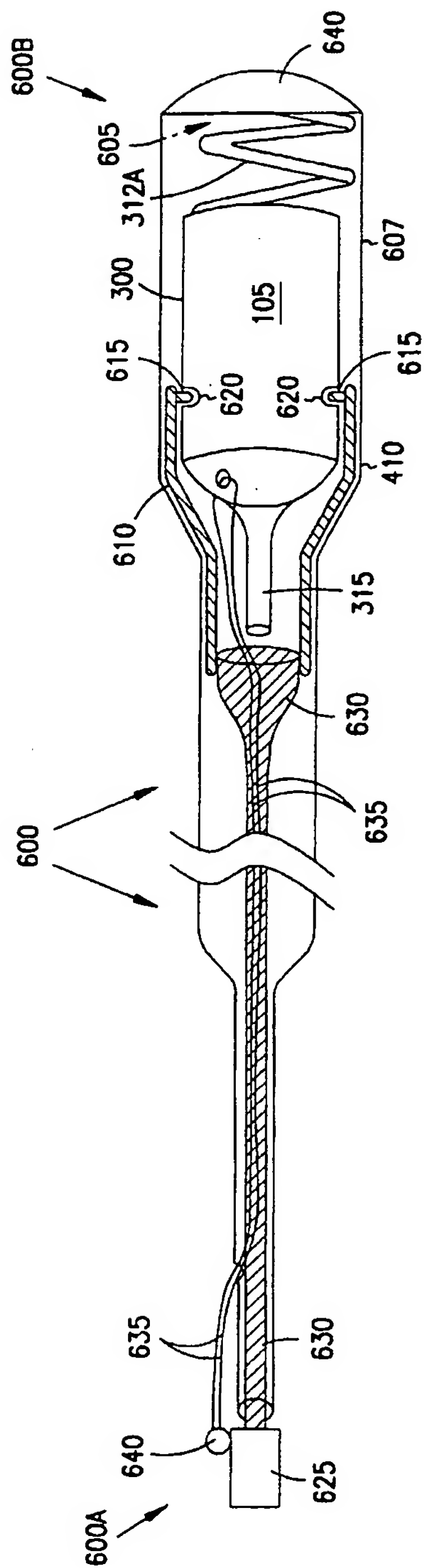


FIG. 6

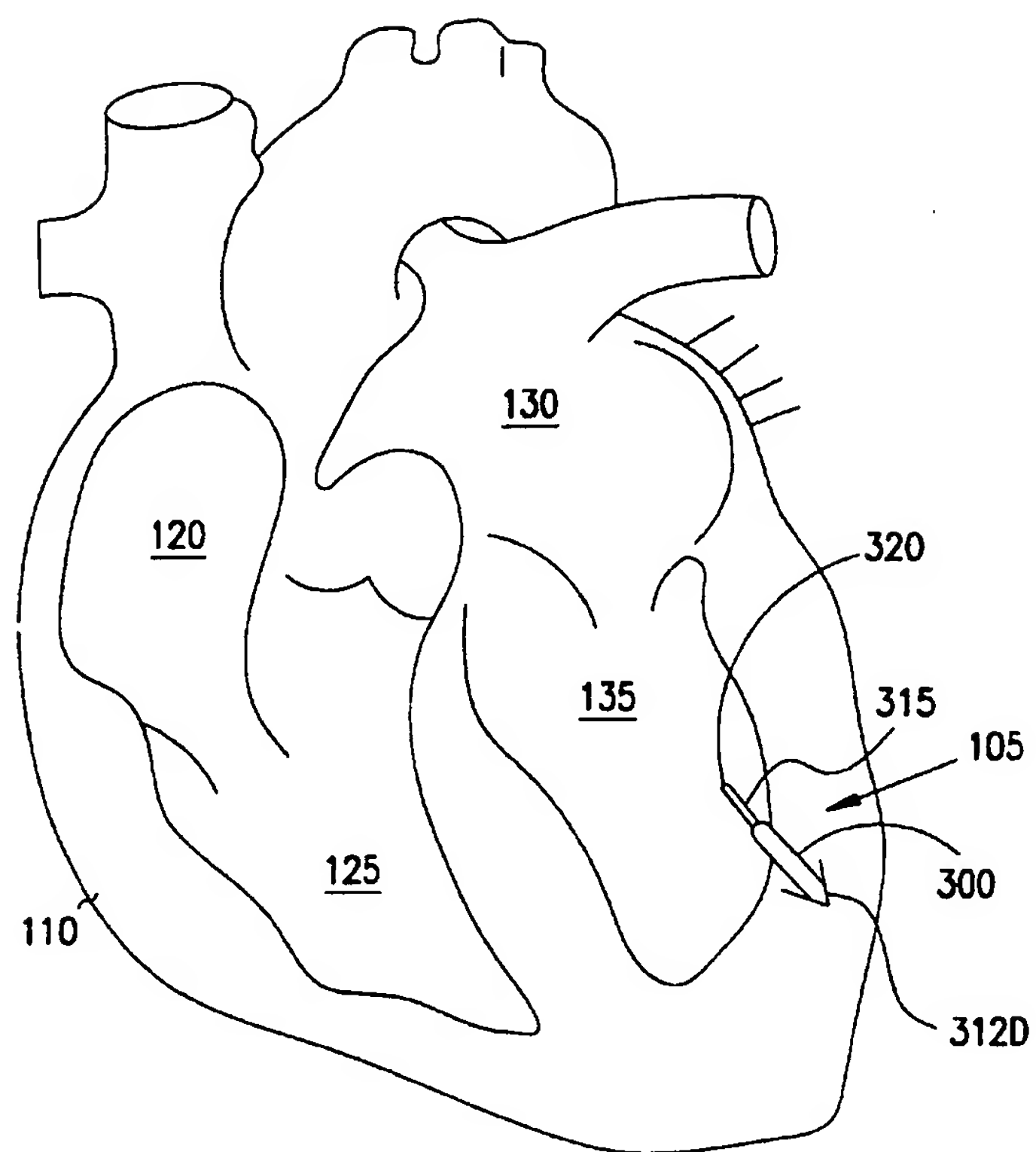


FIG. 7

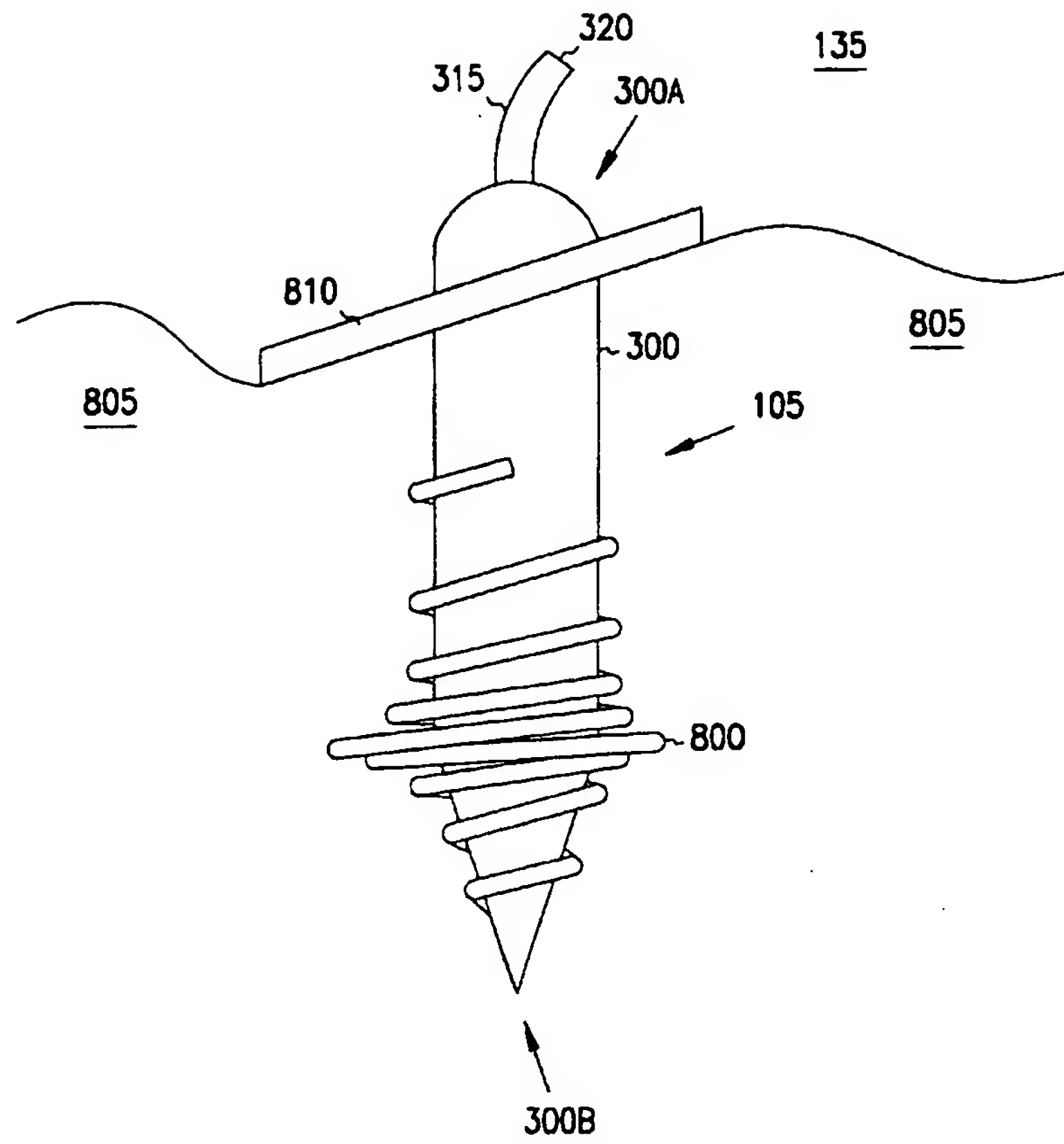


FIG. 8

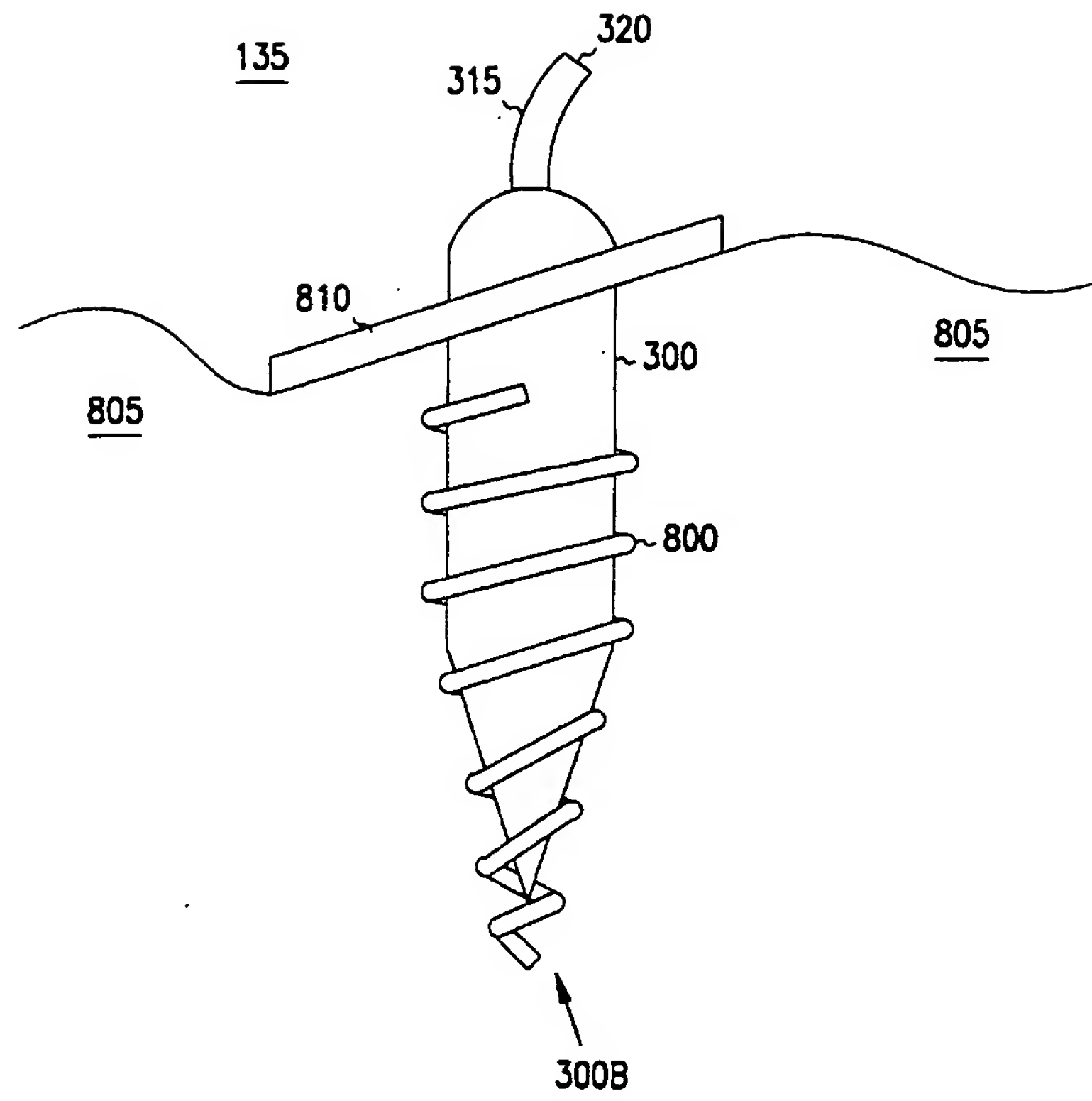


FIG. 9

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